

Safety on the Water

By Bucky Yardume

Safety on the water is paramount. Anyone venturing on any body of water broader than a bath tub hopefully has boned up on one of many Coast Guard, Powerboat Squadron and other safety courses.

So they should know and remember the 'rules of the road'...the use of seagoing 'safety belts,' namely life-jackets...never overcrowding boat capacity...observing safe speeds...staying attuned to weather forecasts and foul weather signals...never 'hot-dogging.'

One rule of thumb for safe boat capacity is maximum weight of 7.5 times the beam times the length times the depth, including motor.

Some other tips...

Block your car wheels on launching ramps. Saw a 4 x 4 length of lumber lengthwise on the diagonal for a block and carry two for wheel chocks.

Also while trailing, anticipate stops and bumps and allow ample room for easy stopping.

Even the smallest rowboat should be equipped with a flashlight for night use (and make sure it's working).

Sailboats also should have running lights at night which should be unobstructed when the boat is heeled.

Stop engines when water skiers are boarding the boat or entering water.

Stand and drain all trapped cooling water from outboards before putting it down.

A simple metal reflector aloft makes it easier for radar equipped ships to spot you, if you're way out.

Speaking of way out, discretion is the better part of valor. Putting out to sea in a cockleshell just isn't smart.

Also, the state safety motto for the highway — 'A little courtesy won't kill you' — holds on the waterways, too.



Bike Trails

A favorite biking area is the Myles Standish State Forest, Plymouth, where there are 16 miles of paved bikeways on three separate trails. One option is the Eastern route, which comes to a fork after 3/4 of a mile. The right hand trail, by far the most popular, circles two ponds, the first of which has a snack bar.

The left hand fork will take you all the way out to the eastern entrance of Myles Standish. Bikers may also take the Western route, which goes out past Fearing Pond and has a few nice stopping areas and places to go

swimming.

Maps of the trails are available at Myles Standish Headquarters, and organized tours of the bikeways in Myles Standish and other locations may be arranged by contacting the Bike Center in Duxbury or Bikeaways in Marshfield.

Wompatuck State Forest in Hingham has eight miles of bike trails. The best place to begin is at the Visitor's Center, about 100 yards from the entrance to the forest. The paths are all paved, and are approximately eight feet wide.

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